

Coins

Some of your cash is smeared with value

By Roger Boye

HERE'S a question from the reader mailbag:

● Q.—We have a \$1 bill that has a small, authentic ink smear near the border on the front side. Could you tell us what this bill would be worth?—P. Z.

A.—The value of such “printing error” bills depends on the size or prominence of the error and the unusualness of the error.

Relatively few people collect U. S. currency with printing errors, and it is difficult to estimate the value of an error note. Few bills with printing errors leave the Bureau of Engraving and Printing because of the rigid inspection standards at the bureau.

Some \$1 bills with prominent ink smudges about one-half inch square in size are on sale for \$10 each at one Chicago area coin shop. The bills are in very fine condition or better.

Printing errors known to exist include a \$1 bill with the reverse design printed over the design on the front side; blank area on the reverse side caused by a fold in the paper during the printing process; weak impression due to lack of ink on the printing plate; notes printed “off center,” that is, the note has no margin on at least one side; and bills with mismatched serial numbers [the serial number appears twice, and, in some rare instances, the numbers don't match].